

EXECUTIVE SERVICES

SELECT BOARD

The Select Board is pleased to submit its annual report for 2021 to Arlington residents.

The Board is composed of five elected residents who set policy and oversee the management of municipal functions of the Town. In April 2021, Eric Helmuth was elected to a three-year term, replacing Joseph A. Curro Jr., who did not seek a fourth term in office. The Board elected Stephen W. DeCoursey as Chair and Diane M. Mahon as Vice Chair. John V. Hurd, who was re-elected to a second term, and Lenard Diggins rounded out the Board.

Year in Review

2021 was another unprecedented year of major effects from the ongoing global pandemic. The Commonwealth lifted the state of emergency on June 15, 2021. Although Town administrative offices reopened their physical spaces at that time, utilization of online services remained high. The Town continued to do business remotely for most public meetings as multiple surges of COVID-19 variants made public gatherings risky throughout the year and into 2022.

The Board continues to be proud of and grateful for dedicated Town employees who performed their duties with excellence and commitment against the backdrop of a pandemic. They led unprecedented public health initiatives to combat COVID-19, kept the public and staff safe, assisted those most in need, created economic recovery efforts to support Arlington businesses, and maintained vital public services in the face of personal risk and challenging safety protocols. You can read more about these efforts throughout this report, but the Board would like to especially acknowledge the hard work and leadership of the Town Manager, Health & Human Services Department, Police and Fire Departments, Department of Public Works, and Department of Planning and Community Development.

American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)

Municipalities across the nation are the beneficiaries of a significant influx of federal funds via the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). Arlington expects to receive \$35.25 million. The funding is to offset the negative health and economic impacts caused by the



HHS Director Christine Bongiorno overseeing one of many COVID-19 vaccination clinics for seniors at Arlington High School's Red Gym.

COVID-19 pandemic and includes investments in public health, economic recovery, and infrastructure improvements. In August, through the leadership of the Town Manager, the Arlington ARPA Framework was developed to identify programs and projects to allocate funds in accordance with funding guidelines while taking public input into consideration. In this iterative process, the Board endorses each program and project before funding is allocated. As the Town continues through the ARPA process, and the four-year period in which to spend this funding, it is important to understand that the allocations may shift as the ARPA Framework continues to evolve.



Economic Development Coordinator Ali Carter stands by the upgraded Medford Street parklet one of the many initiatives of the Economic Development & Recovery Task Force.



Arlington Select Board : John V. Hurd, Eric Helmuth, Diane M. Mahon (Vice Chair), Stephen W. DeCoursey (Chair), and Lenard Diggins.

EXECUTIVE SERVICES



Facilities and Fiscal Planning

New High School

The new Arlington High School remains on schedule and on budget despite the ongoing pandemic. Site work for the new school began in April 2020. Phase 1 construction began in November 2020 and was conducted through the year. Phase 1 will be completed in February 2022 and will open the Performing Arts and STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts & Mathematics) wings to students. Phase 2 of construction, estimated to conclude in September 2023, begins immediately thereafter and consists of demolishing part of the existing facility to build the new Humanities, District Administration & Preschool wing. The new school is anticipated to be complete in September 2024, followed by approximately nine months of site work.



Central School Renovation / Arlington Community Center

Renovations at the Central School building at 27 Maple Street continued through 2021. When it reopens in the Spring of 2022, it will be renamed the Arlington Community Center. The building will continue to house the Council on Aging staff, programs, and activities; Health & Human Services Offices; and the Arlington Center for the Arts. The building will also become fully accessible and compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

MWRA Debt Shift

With the Long Range Planning Committee, the Board developed a plan to reduce the MWRA debt shift

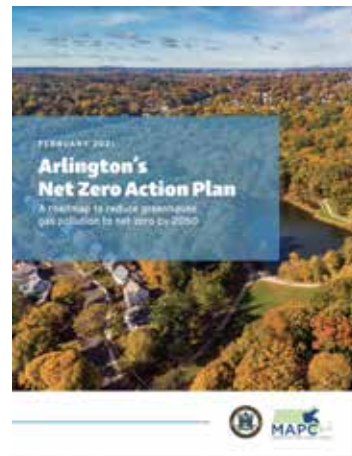


as a means of offsetting tax bill impacts of the AHS debt exclusion and the operating override of 2019.

The Board pledges to live by the budget commitments outlined in the Town Manager's Budget and Financial Plan shown in the next section of this report.

Net Zero Plan Endorsement

In 2018 the Select Board voted to commit Arlington to becoming carbon neutral by 2050 (net zero emissions of greenhouse gases from all sources). Following this vote, Arlington and three municipalities began working with the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), after receiving a Planning Assistance Grant from the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, to develop greenhouse gas inventories and net zero plans for each community. The Select Board endorsed the Town's Net Zero Action Plan in February of 2021.



Transportation & Parking

In July the Board endorsed Connect Arlington, the Town's Sustainable Transportation Plan. Connect Arlington supplants the Traffic and Circulation section of the Master Plan with a more robust and detailed explanation of existing transportation conditions and goals and strategies for the transportation system in Arlington. Connect Arlington focuses on all aspects of transportation and mobility in Arlington, including walking, bicycling, public transportation, driving, shared mobility, and micro-mobility. The plan provides a vision for the

development of the transportation system in Arlington over the next 20 years.



In November short-term improvements to the intersection of Mass Ave, Appleton Street, and Appleton Place were made after considerable review by the Mass Ave/Appleton Design Review Committee. Efforts to secure funding for long-term improvements are underway.

Veterans' Acknowledgments

The Select Board unanimously approved the designation of the property adjacent to the Central Fire Station as Arlington's Veterans Memorial Park. Through the work of Arlington's Veterans' Services Director and public input, the park will be updated to provide a fitting tribute to veterans.

In November, it was with great joy that the annual Veterans Day ceremony was open to the public for the first time since COVID-19 restrictions were instituted. The Board very much looks forward to more public celebrations as public health safety allows.

Acknowledgments & Recognitions

In 2021 long-time Assessor and former Select Board member Kevin Feeley passed away. He leaves behind an enduring legacy in Arlington having served for 35 years on the Board of Assessors and the Select Board from 1964-1970. He also served on the Parks and Recreation Commission and Town Meeting. He will be truly missed. The Board wishes to welcome William Zagata as the newly elected Assessor.

The Board would like to thank Joe Curro for his 9 years of service on the Select Board. In those years Joe brought great enthusiasm, intellect, and thoughtfulness in his interactions with his colleagues on the Board and with the public. The Board wishes Joe well in his future endeavors.

The Board would also like to thank former Select Board member Dan Dunn for stepping in to serve on an interim basis and to provide continuity when Joe had to leave the Board a few weeks before the end of his term.



Adam Chapdelaine, Arlington Town Manager

TOWN MANAGER

I am pleased to deliver what will now be my tenth Annual Report to the Town of Arlington in the capacity of Town Manager. I am honored to serve the Town and I am thankful to the Select Board for continuing to entrust me with this role. My goal in making this report is to provide an overview of the financial, organizational, and community-based efforts that took place during 2021.

As the Select Board mentioned in their report, 2021 continued to be another unprecedented year managing a public health crisis, initiating recovery efforts, and conducting Town business among a global pandemic. Challenges were plentiful but staff and the Arlington community continue to rise to the occasion to show their resiliency and still accomplish great things. Throughout this report you will read about these accomplishments, but I will highlight a few here, but first an overview of the Town's financial outlook.

Town's Financial Outlook

It is important to note at the outset that the budget has been formulated in an environment of continuing economic uncertainty. This uncertainty has been precipitated by the COVID-19 pandemic and its corresponding economic impacts. Though there is reason to believe that the years ahead may provide some returned stability to governmental revenues and workload expectations, such stability has yet be realized and is challenging to project with accuracy.

However, the framework for our long range financial planning remains intact. FY2022, the current fiscal year, is the third year of a four-year plan that incorporated the Proposition 2 ½ override of 2019 designed to carry the Town's budgets through FY2023. The Select Board adopted a set of commitments which served as the basis for the \$5,500,000 operating override that was successfully passed via a Town-wide ballot measure on June 11, 2019. The Board's commitments and the status of fulfilling them are as follows:

EXECUTIVE SERVICES

- 1) Exercise fiscal discipline and provide quality municipal services.
 - a. Commit to no Proposition 2½ overrides for at least four years. – **This budget submission maintains this commitment.**
 - b. Continue to increase general education operating budgets by 3.5% annually. – **This commitment is maintained.**
 - c. Continue to increase general government operating budgets by 3.25% annually. – **This commitment is maintained with a proposed Town budget increase of 2.93%.**
 - d. Continue to fund special education cost growth at a rate of 7% per year. – **This commitment is maintained.**

2) Respond to ongoing school enrollment growth pressures. Increase the education budget for future enrollment increases at a rate of 50% of per pupil expenditures. – **Due to decreases in enrollment, this is being addressed.**

- 3) Build Arlington's future.
 - a. Phase in funding of the School Committee's Multi-Year Plan to: address the impact of explosive enrollment growth of 27% since 2011; improve instruction; close the achievement gap for high needs students; ensure safe and supportive schools; and attract, retain, and develop talented staff. Adopt the following schedule of increases to base operating budgets: FY20 - \$600,000; FY21 - \$600,000; FY22 - \$800,000; FY23 - \$800,000. – **This commitment is maintained, but the schedule of funding has changed due to the economic impacts of the pandemic.**

- b. Improve mobility for all residents, and support the goals of the Town's Complete Streets and Age-Friendly Community initiatives by adding \$250,000 to the base budget for pedestrian infrastructure -- including sidewalk brick removal and repair -- and senior transportation, such investments to be guided by the Town's sustainable mobility planning efforts. – **This commitment is maintained, with \$200,000 for mobility improvements being included in the capital budget and \$50,000 in funding included in the Council on Aging Transportation Enterprise Fund.**

4) Minimize impact on taxpayers, particularly seniors and others with income challenges.

- a. Advance new tax relief programs, including a municipal circuit breaker and increased eligibility for property tax deferral options, and publicize existing relief programs. – **A new tax deferral program is in place with higher eligibility criteria to allow residents greater access to the program.**

- b. Remove certain water and sewer debt costs from property tax bills. – **The Select Board's reduction of the MWRA Debt Shift in coordination with the issuance of debt related to the Arlington High School Project is complete and no longer in the Town budget beginning in FY23.**

- c. Pursue new revenue sources. – **This commitment is fulfilled on a year over year basis.**

- d. Work with financial leadership to develop bonding schedules that will minimize single-year tax increases and debt service costs related to the Arlington High School rebuild. – **This commitment is being maintained by the Town's Finance Department.**

5) Protect against future fiscal shocks and maintain the Town's strong bond rating. Maintain financial reserves at 5% or better for the duration of the four-year plan. – **This commitment is maintained.**

Beyond the investments outlined above, the FY2023 budget proposal is a level service budget that maintains core municipal services (Police, Fire, DPW) at current levels. Targeted investments have been made to address community needs. For in-depth information about the Town's financial condition please refer to the Town Manager's Annual Budget & Financial Plan online at: visit arlingtonma.gov/budgets.



American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)

As previously mentioned, Arlington is set to receive \$35.25 million in funds from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). Spending of these funds have specific requirements and Arlington is making investments in all allowable areas, including public and behavioral health, economic recovery, affordable housing, premium pay for essential workers, equity and outreach, food security, parks and playgrounds, and infrastructure projects.

From this funding the Town is allocating \$10 million to revenue loss, the maximum allowed, to help reduce the amount asked for the upcoming override vote. You may view additional details of funding and project information at arlingtonma.gov/arpa.

Commitment to Racial Equity

Building off the great work and investments made in 2020, the Town's DEI Division continues to broaden awareness and knowledge of systemic racism. Through ARPA funding, the Town is in the process of hiring a consultant to help develop an Equity Action Plan. The consultant will conduct a community equity audit and provide recommendations for improved equitable practices within the Town. Additional investments in the DEI Division are being made to hire a Community Outreach Coordinator and ADA Coordinator.

Capital Projects

As previously mentioned in the Select Board report and with further details contained in this report (p.66) the Arlington High School Building Project continues. The project is still on budget and on track to be completed in September of 2024. The Public Works Facility Project is well underway, but not without its challenges in no small part brought on by the pandemic and ongoing supply chain issues (details on p. 100). Many staff and certain DPW operational divisions have been moved off-site, and the new town-wide server room was delivered on time with the entire data center being successfully migrated over in a critical effort closely coordinated by many Town and School personnel. In 2022 we look forward to opening the newly renovated Central School as Arlington's Community Center.



An overhead shot of the Public Works Facility project in progress.



Sustainability/Energy Conservation

Green Communities

In 2010 Arlington was named a Green Community by the state Department of Energy Resources. This designation was in recognition of the work that Arlington had done in the past to reduce energy usage, and the plans it had to further reduce energy use in the future. Arlington has substantially benefited from competitive Green Communities grants from the Green Communities Division, having received seven grant awards over the past eight years with a cumulative total of \$1,873,615, among the highest grant totals in the state. The most recent grant award of \$100,000 was received in 2021 and was used to replace inefficient lighting fixtures with high efficiency LEDs at the Peirce and Brackett Elementary Schools and upgrade insulation at the Community Safety Building. These projects are projected to save nearly \$20,000 cumulatively in electricity costs annually.

Arlington Community Electricity (ACE)

ACE continues to provide residents and businesses rate stability and renewable energy options from which to choose. Direct Energy will be Arlington's Electricity Supplier until its term ends in November 2022. In 2021 volunteers across town launched a lawn sign campaign to encourage residents to opt-up to either 50% or 100% of renewable energy. At the end of the year 1,100 households have chosen to do so.

Master Plan

Four projects were completed in 2021 that took cues from the Master Plan. These projects include the completion of the Economic Analysis of Industrial Zoning Districts; Connect Arlington, the Town's Sustainable Transportation Plan; the Net Zero Action Plan; and the Fair Housing Action Plan. The Economic Analysis of Industrial Zoning Districts resulted in proposed zoning amendments to modernize the industrial zoning district and create opportunities for redevelopment in these areas that include modern uses and sustainability measures. These amendments were submitted for consideration and subsequently approved by the 2021 Annual Town Meeting. Connect Arlington provides a vision for the development of Arlington's transportation system

EXECUTIVE SERVICES

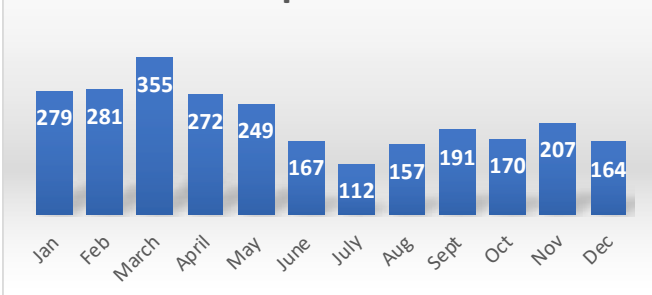
over the next 20 years. The Net Zero Action Plan will guide Arlington toward achieving net zero greenhouse gas pollution by the year 2050; a recommendation of the plan to allow reconstruction of the foundations of homes on nonconforming lots provided the new construction reaches energy efficiency standards was approved by 2021 Annual Town Meeting. The Fair Housing Action Plan addresses equitable access to housing choice in Arlington and describes concrete actions the Town can take to eliminate housing discrimination and segregation.



Meetings Held By Remote Participation

Due to the state of emergency brought on by the pandemic the Town continued to conduct meetings remotely throughout 2021. The Remote Participation Study Committee began surveying the public as well as Boards, Committees and Commissions to review how virtual and/or hybrid meetings have been received, and how they could be used when the State emergency provisions to the Open Meeting Law are lifted. In their interim report the Committee suggests equipping certain meeting spaces with the necessary audio/visual equipment to pilot hybrid meetings for selected committees. The Remote Participation Study Committee will offer additional recommendations in its 2022 and 2023 reports to Town Meeting.

Meetings Held by Remote Participation 2021



Public Records Center

The Public Records Center is Arlington's online customer service portal where residents can make requests for and receive public records. The system was launched in 2017 to foster compliance with the updated Public Records Law that went into effect January 1, 2017. In its ongoing commitment to open government and transparency, the Town proactively posts many commonly requested documents to its website and provides access to or copies of public records upon request. Although public record requests can be submitted in any fashion, the Public Records Center is growing in popularity each year due to its convenience, and increased public interest in local government matters.

Some public records requests are simple in nature, seeking only a copy of a single permit or plan, while others are labor intensive, requiring input from a number of Departments or time-consuming searches of historical archives or electronic records. The Public Records Law requires municipalities to designate a Records Access Officer to coordinate the response to public record requests. In Arlington, this function is performed by the Deputy Town Manager for Operations. Below is a summary table of common request types.

Public Records Requests	2019	2020	2021
Fire Department Reports	43	36	29
Maps / GIS Data	56	89	100
Municipal Records	169	278	175
Property / Building Specific Information	177	181	213
Total Requests	445	584	614



Communications & Customer Service

Public communications and customer service remains a top priority. The Town's existing communication channels continue to be extremely valuable during the ongoing pandemic both to deliver critical public health information, accurate information, and to provide reliable online service delivery.

In addition to informing the public, Town staff rely on several systems to interact with the public. These systems include the following: the Request/Answer Center, arlingtonma.gov website, SiteImprove the Town's website ADA compliance checker, social media channels,

EXECUTIVE SERVICES

Website Traffic (arlingtonma.gov)	2018	2019	2020	2021
Page Views	1,687,147	1,590,677	2,385,342	2,324,420
Visits/Sessions*	648,305	603,733	1,029,520	1,212,208
Frequency & Recency*: Over 200 visits to website	29,296	29,752	28,138	33,455
COVID-19 Section / PageViews			300,414	95,950

and Arlington Alerts mass notification. The chart above shows how many staff utilize these systems.

Request/Answer Center

The Request/Answer Center is Arlington's online customer service portal where residents can make requests of Town services (and track them), ask questions, and find answers. 2021 marked the fourteenth year for the service and its utilization by staff continues to grow. The Request/Answer Center has 80 staff users and is heavily used by Public Works, followed by the Town Manager's Office, and Health & Human Services.

Arlingtonma.gov

Arlingtonma.gov is the Town's communication hub. The site serves a population of approximately 43,000 residents, surrounding communities, and beyond. The site supports the online communication and outreach activities of fifteen departments, and over ninety boards, committees, and commissions. Since the institution of the Open Meeting Law (OML) in 2010 approximately 1,300-1,500 documents are added to the site annually, mostly agendas and minutes. There are currently 68 users of the content management system (CMS) that powers the website, up from 65 users in 2019.

Traffic to arlingtonma.gov continues to remain high, due to the pandemic and the public interacting with the Town remotely.

Arlington Alerts Mass Notification System

Since 2012 Arlington Alerts have been notifying residents via phone, text, and email before, during, and after emergencies or to relay important

information. In early 2022 the Town switched vendors moving to Everbridge Mass Notification for its Arlington Alert system. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts uses Everbridge for their mass communications and has done so extensively through the pandemic. Through the contract with the state, Everbridge was able to offer reduced pricing for Arlington that will save the Town approximately \$5,000 over the course of the three-year contract.

Arlington Alerts



Receive emergency/important Town Notifications via phone, text, and email.

Town Email Lists

In 2021 the Town's website vendor, Granicus, informed the Town it was moving the Town's opt-in email distribution lists to a new email platform in early 2022. The new platform will provide more reliability and an easy-to-use portal for users to manage their profile. The move was conducted in early spring and so far, we are pleased to report the new platform is delivering on improved delivery of email notifications to the public.

Online Communications	2018	2019	2020	2021
Town of Arlington Notices Subscribers	5,242	5,713	6,046	5,651
% of Growth from previous year	1%	1%	6%	-7%
% Compared with # of households (19,000)	28%	28%	32%	30%
Arlington Alert Emails Subscribers*	5,144	5,351	6,049	6,446
% of Growth from previous year	3%	4%	13%	7%
% Compared with # of households (19,000)	27%	28%	32%	34%



Renovations at Town Hall plaza include a sub-slab snow melt system.

Acknowledgements

Arlington is very fortunate to have so many talented citizens willing to volunteer their time to serve the Town in various capacities including Town Meeting, Boards, and Committees. Together with our elected leaders, management team, and staff, they make Arlington a special community. I would like to thank the Select Board for its continued leadership and support throughout my tenth year as Town Manager. I am also very grateful for the professionalism, knowledge, and support provided by Deputy Town Manager/Finance Director, Sandy Pooler and Deputy Town Manager of Operations, Jim Feeney.

I would also like to recognize the retirement of Michael Byrne who served the Town for 29 years, the last 21 years as the Director of Inspectional Services. I'd also like to wish Director of Assessments, Paul Tierney, and Facilities Director Greg Walters the best of luck in their next chapter as they move on from Arlington and welcome Patricia Sheppard as the Town's new Chief Information Officer and Mike Ciampa as its new Director of Inspectional Services.

In early 2022 the Town lost a friendly advocate for the environment when Brian Rehrig passed away. Brian was deeply involved with Arlington. He served as a Town Meeting Member for over thirty years, was Vice Chair of The Symmes Advisory Committee, Vice Chair of the Capital Planning Committee, and served on the Arlington High School Building Committee. He will be missed by many and leaves an enduring legacy that will benefit the community for many years.

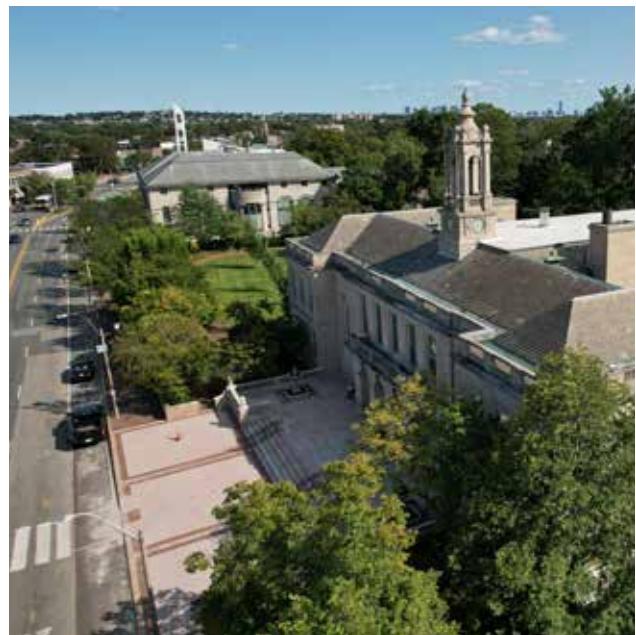
I would also like to express my warmest appre-

ciation for my office staff. Kristen DeFrancisco, Julie Wayman, and Domenic Lanzillotti. They are exceptional public employees dedicated to providing the best possible service to each and every person interacting with the Town Manager's Office. I would also like to express my sincere gratitude and congratulations to Joan Roman for her excellent work in serving as the Town's Public Information Officer, which includes, among many things, the production of this report and the management of the Town's website. In early 2022 the Massachusetts Municipal Association recognized this work when they announced that the Town's website had won the MMA Municipal Website Award and last year's Annual Report took 2nd place in their MMA Town Report Contest.

On March 1st, I officially announced my decision to leave the role of Town Manager, effective June 17, 2022. 10 years serving as Town Manager and 2 years before that serving as the Deputy Town Manager has been a tremendous honor.

I'll be forever grateful for the opportunity here in Arlington and I'll be forever proud of what we've accomplished as a team. I'm grateful to the Board for the faith and trust that it has put in me, and I am thankful to the team of Town employees that always rise to the moment. I'll always appreciate and cherish the support that I've been granted by Town residents and volunteers. Arlington is a tremendous community, it has been a wonderful place to work, and I will forever be grateful for the opportunity that it has given me to build my professional skills while working on an array of important issues.

From the bottom of my heart, thank you to everyone for making Arlington such a wonderful Town. It will always hold a special place in my heart.



Finished ADA compliant plaza with custom color exposed aggregate finish.